RING MIMIC

5E MONSTROUS ENCOUNTER

A monster and a magic item by
Lucas Garczewski

Hungry Ring of Mimicry

Totally normal ring, uncommon (requires attunement)

Just a normal, shiny ring. No reason to be suspicious.

Once the ring is on your finger and as long as you have more than 0 maximum hp, it cannot be removed.

While you are wearing the ring, your maximum hp is lowered by 1 point for no apparent reason.

Nah, can't be the ring.

You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed.

Additionally, you are subject to the effects of one of the following sections, depending on the ring's disposition towards you.

The ring is hostile towards you until you convince it you're a friend and attune to it. Good luck.

While hostile

You have disadvantage on Constitution and Dexterity saving throws.

While you are asleep or unconscious, the ring may lower your maximum hit points by 1d4 at the end of your turn.

You taste delicious.

Once you are no longer unconscious, your maximum hit points value is reset after a long rest or via spells such as *lesser restoration*.

While friendly

While you are wearing this ring and are attuned to it, you can cast the *alter self* spell from it as an action at will. When you do, you take 1d4 piercing damage.

Ring Mimic

Tiny monstrosity (shapechanger), typically neutral

Armor Class 15 (Natural Armor)
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 6)
Speed 15 ft., 40 ft. in ring form (rolling)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (–5)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	6 (–2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws CON +5, WIS +4
Skills Perception +3, Stealth +4
Damage Immunities acid
Condition Immunities prone
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Understands Common but can't speak it, Telepathy 5 ft.
Challenge 1

Shapechanger. The ring mimic transforms into a ring or back into its true, amorphous form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Roll and bounce (Ring Form Only). The ring mimic's speed increases to 40 ft. and it can bounce off surfaces with a metallic clang, performing a long jump or a high jump, using the rules for Special Types of Movement (*Player's Handbook*, Chapter 8).

Magic Item (Ring Form Only). When worn on a finger, the ring mimic confers the effects of a *hungry ring of mimicry* on the wearer.

False Appearance (Ring Form Only). If the ring mimic is motionless at the start of combat, it has advantage on its initiative roll. Moreover, if a creature hasn't observed the ring mimic move or act, that creature must succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check to discern that the ring mimic is animate.

Actions

Chomp. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature. Hit: 2 (1d4) piercing damage plus 1 acid damage.

Control Meat Puppet. The ring mimic slips onto a finger of a target creature (or corpse) of medium or smaller size within its space. The creature must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or the ring mimic takes control of the body like a puppeteer.

On a failed save, the target regains 1 hit point. On each of its turns, the ring mimic uses the target's movement, actions and reactions instead of its own, but cannot cast spells.

If the target is reduced to 0 hit points while under this effect, or succeeds on the saving throw to prevent it, the effect ends and it may not be controlled in this way again.

Description

Ring mimics are specialized parasites and opportunistic scavengers. While small and fragile, they can be very patient and some have been known to wait centuries for their next meal.

Larvae or separate species? The origin of ring mimics is a matter of debate among scholars. Some believe these little mimics are a larval form of the larger true mimic. According to this theory, by attaching themselves to humanoids or traveling alone, they find a suitable new subterranean environment where they can grow into their full form. Other students of monstrosities suggest that the ring mimic is a more specialized and cunning mimic subspecies.

Skulking opportunists. Unlike their larger, chest-sized cousins, ring mimics do not attack directly unless cornered. Instead, they rely on their small size and agility to covertly move from host to host to feed. As available bodies are consumed, the need arises to migrate to a new hunting ground. The ring mimic's jeweled form then serves as both a disguise and a lure to recruit humanoids as unwitting bodyguards and beasts of burden, helping the mimic move from one cavern or dungeon to the next.

Story ideas

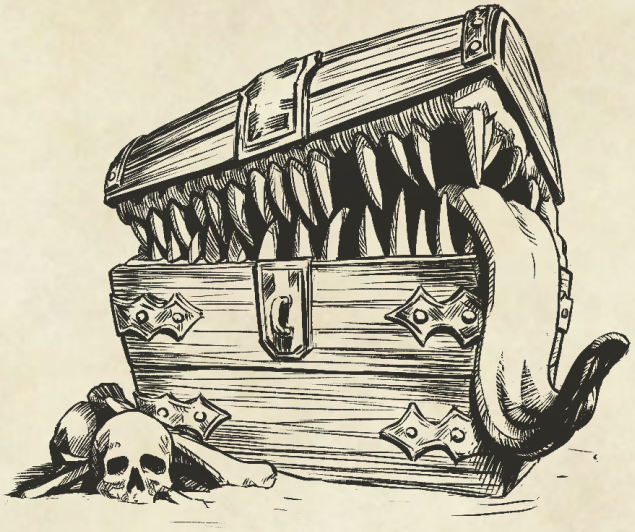
While the ring mimic may easily enter your party's story as a treasure they find on their adventures, there are many other ways to both introduce and use it once found.

Introducing the ring mimic

- **A jeweled fugitive.** A wizard specializing in the study of magical creatures hires the party to capture "a thief who stole her magic ring". A desperate chase full of random body-swapping ensues. When finally caught, the mimic pleads to not let "that monster" torture it again.
- **A desperate plea.** With her final breath, a mortally wounded adventurer implores the party to save her companions, who are still trapped in the dungeon. She dies trying to remove a gold ring from her finger.
- **A royal meat puppet.** The captain of the Queen's Guard swears he saw the king kill his queen. And yet, her majesty appears alive and well (with a new ring always on her finger...). The party is asked to uncover the truth. One does not simply accuse the king without adamantine-clad proof!

After finding the ring mimic

- **A bloody map.** After a full night's sleep, the party member wearing the ring wakes up to a grisly scene. It appears they have drawn a map in their sleep, with their blood. Will the party follow it? Does it lead to great treasure or a nest of mimics?
- **A truth revealed.** A character who befriended their ring mimic starts receiving telepathic warnings from their little friend. The ring is identifying foes, allies, and strangers as shapeshifters. Everyone's a mimic! Now, clearly, this is some ruse, misunderstanding or a strange mimic joke. Until one of those identified by the ring does turn out to be a changeling. What now?



Running the ring mimic

Detection and investigation

Surprise and mystery are key for a creature such as the ring mimic. To achieve this, you may need to rely on a dose of initial misdirection, followed by gradually revealing more information.

To allow for this initial surprise, the ring mimic is under a permanent effect equivalent to *Nystul's magic aura*. This hides its true nature from most low level magic.

Below are suggestions on what some divination spells and effects would reveal about a ring mimic.

Investigating with magic

Spell or magic used	Learning
Detect magic	The ring is magical and emits a transmutation aura.
Identify	The ring allows you to cast *disguise self* at will.
Detect evil and good	The ring is not detected by the spell.
Truesight	This damnable ring is alive! It's a shapeshifter!

More difficult divination: Should you wish to make this magical discovery process more difficult and tense, you can have the ring mimic bite its wearer when a detection spell is cast on the ring (use the *Chomp* attack's damage). If the wearer is casting the detection spell, you may ask for a Constitution saving throw and have the spell fail on a failure (DC 10 + damage taken).

If player characters take the time to examine the ring closely, they might find out more. Suggested learnings from the application of some skills checks and their DCs are given in the table below.

Investigating with skills

Skill used	Check DC	Learning
Intelligence (Arcana)	10	The ring's gold band is untarnished. Lack of normal wear is a common trait of magic items.
Wisdom (Medicine)	15	The skin around the ring seems a shade more pale. As if the item was draining blood to power itself.
Intelligence (Investigation)	15	The gold of this ring is not quite gold, the jewel is not refracting light as it should. (Proficiency with Jeweler's Tools provides advantage on this check.)
Intelligence (Investigation)	18	The ring appears to be slightly undulating, moving slightly, as if it is... alive?

Encounter design and combat

The ring mimic is not a ferocious monster that attacks outright with a loud roar. No mimic is like that.

However, even when compared to their larger, more common mimic brethren, the ring mimic is at a significant disadvantage when confronting adventurers directly.

For this reason, ring mimics tend to avoid direct combat whenever possible. In fact, this is an adversary for the party to first discover, chase, then finally capture or kill.

It will be a much more memorable encounter – or series of encounters – if you prepare:

- a surprising discovery,
- places a shiny little shiny object can hide,
- bodies (unconscious, dead or undead) a crafty monstrosity could puppeteer.

Ideas for bodies to puppeteer

- a zombie or ghoul
- one of the unfortunates who tried to brave this dungeon before
- an enemy just defeated by the party
- the hostage the party are trying to rescue

Ideas for places to hide

- a dragon's hoard
- the bottom of a trap
- the stone finger of a statue

The Ring Mimic in Other Worlds

Ravenloft: Vagabond Ring

Ring, rare (requires attunement)

Among the Mists surrounding the Domains of Dread lurks a subspecies of ring mimics more bloodthirsty, ruthless and insidious than those found on other planes.

Every now and then, a Mist Walker emerges from the Mists with an unfamiliar ring around their finger. It won't come off.

While you are wearing the ring, your maximum hit points value is lowered by 1 point.

You also have advantage on saving throws against being charmed.

Once on your finger, the ring cannot be removed until *remove curse* or a similar spell is cast on the ring. It might slip off your finger if you die, though, if that's any consolation.

Additionally, you are subject to the effects of one of the following sections, depending on the ring's disposition towards you.

The ring is hostile towards you until you convince it you're a friend and attune to it.

While hostile

When you sleep, the mist ring consumes your finger, lowering your max hp by 1d4, and moves to one of your remaining fingers. No, you do not wake up. This process repeats each time you sleep.

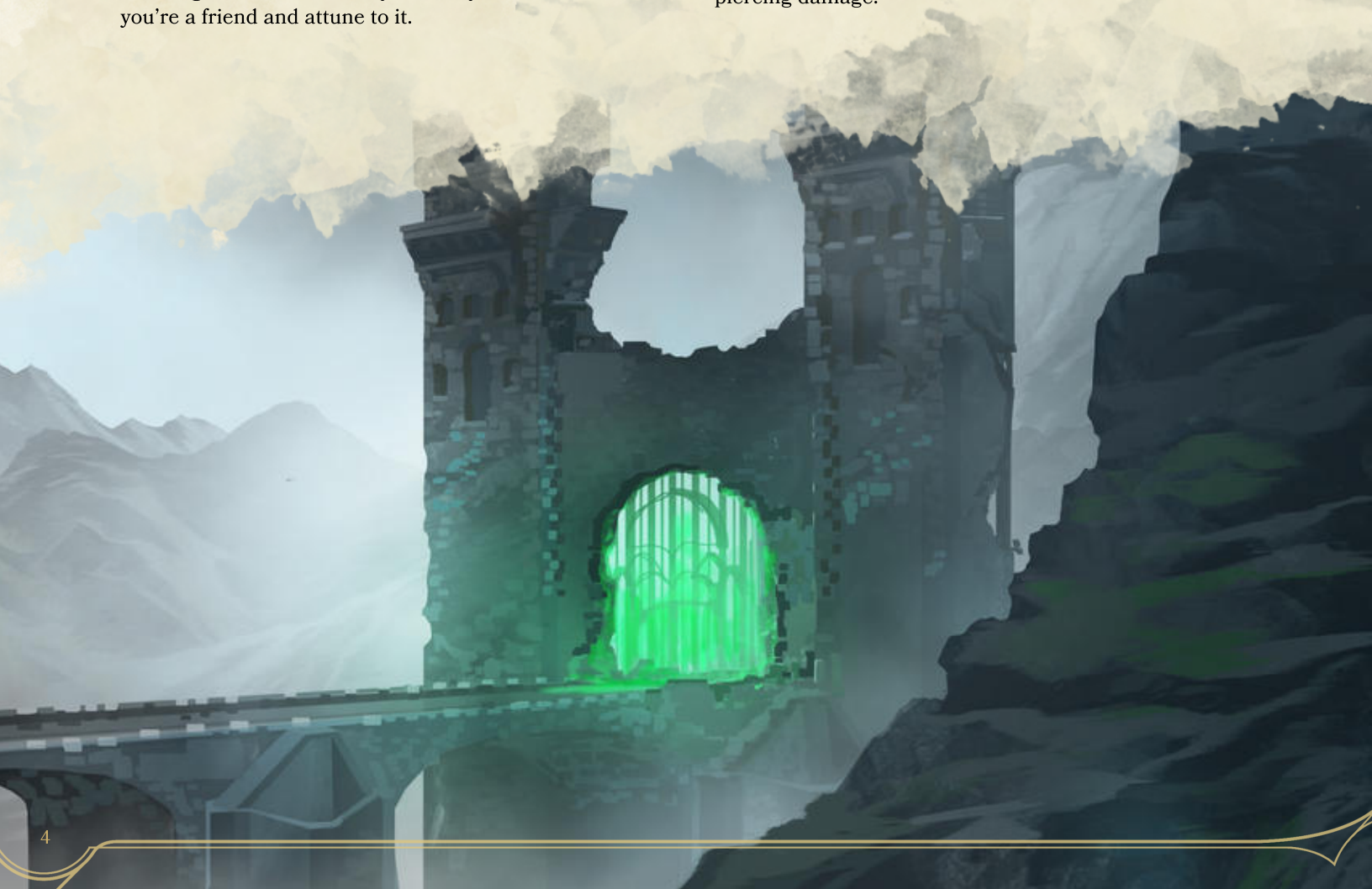
Any fingers lost this way can only be regrown via restoration spells such as *greater restoration*.

If you lose 2 or more fingers on a hand, you have disadvantage on all attacks, skill and ability checks made using that hand.

If you lose 3 or more fingers on a hand, you can't use that hand for Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks and may not be able to use certain items at all (at the DM's discretion).

While friendly

While wearing this ring, you can cast the *alter self* spell from it as an action at will. When you do, you take 1d4 piercing damage.



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